

by their Creator with certain, absolute rights—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness—and governments are instituted to preserve those rights.

It was Philadelphia.

It was July 4, 1776.

It was the Declaration of Independence.

Then, after 8 years of war, this “rabble,” as the British called the colonists, defeated King George III.

We went our own way.

“Independence”—I like the sound of that word. It means that we the people have rule over government, and government will be our servant rather than our being government’s serf.

Liberty, freedom, independence. These three noble words are a reality in this, the greatest of all nations. As a Son of the American Revolution, I thank the patriots who gave us independence.

So, Mr. Speaker, next week on this special day, fly the flag, listen to the band play “Stars and Stripes Forever,” and thank the good Lord for shedding His grace on the United States of America.

And that’s just the way it is.

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE BIRTHRIGHTS

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, none of us get to where we are by ourselves.

I was very proud to see the former chairperson of the Financial Services Committee, Chairperson Frank, who is no longer with Congress, not only address DOMA, but also address section 5 of the Voting Rights Act by way of section 4 and the importance of it.

Human rights are birthrights. They are rights that courts can recognize they should not deny. What the Court did with DOMA was correct. I support the dignity of human beings to have equal opportunities in the greatest country in the world.

I thank Chairman Frank, and I want him to know that he stands with us, and I stand with him, and I stand with all persons who are being discriminated against in an invidious way. Human rights cannot be denied, because they are birthrights.

LEAVE NOBODY BEHIND

(Mr. NUGENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday marks the fourth year since Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl was reported missing in action in Afghanistan.

It is on this sober occasion that veterans and concerned citizens across the United States will appeal to their government, asking those who have the means to find every unaccounted soldier, sailor, airman, marine, or guardsman and bring them home.

Currently, less than 1 percent of the American population serves in the Armed Forces at any time. Though their sacrifice is great, many Americans are not touched by this on a personal level because the numbers of our servicemembers are so few.

The men and women who step between us and those who would harm us are young, but they are brave and they are strong, so it’s easy to forget that they are so young, filled with an ambition, passion, honor—and a full life ahead of them with unrestrained potential.

Our troops are the children of concerned parents. Many of them are also parents of scared children, and that collective fear is endured by every family left behind. When warfighters do not come home, when they are held as captives or their whereabouts are unknown, the strain on loved ones is unbearable.

All three of my sons are highly capable and well-trained soldiers, but every time they deploy, I worry about when they are away.

My wife and I know the anxiety of Blue Star parents. Our hearts and prayers go out to Gold Star parents, but I cannot imagine what it is to not know the condition or fate of a child missing in action or held as a prisoner of war. So it is today that we recognize the solemn responsibility a Nation has to servicemembers and their families.

Congressman ANDREWS and I join with our Senate colleagues in this bipartisan, bicameral resolution: to support the military’s efforts to rescue or recover every warfighter; to remind the American people and their elected representatives of our national responsibility to the families of those who protect us; and to assure every member of the Armed Forces—past, present, and future—that we leave nobody behind.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that those here remember Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl.

STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATES

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in 2 days, at midnight, by law, the interest rates for the subsidized Stafford student loan program will double, from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent, raising interest rates for 7.5 million college students at exactly the time they are taking out loans for next fall’s semester.

What a terrible statement about this Congress that we failed to move forward with legislation to protect those rates. My legislation, H.R. 1595, which had 195 discharge signatures, would have protected that rate.

Again, the leadership of this House turned a deaf ear and insisted that their bill, passed on May 23, somehow protected those college students. The Congressional Budget Office looked at that bill that passed that day, and it concluded that that bill was worse

than doing nothing and allowing the rates to double to 6.8 percent. It is, again, a bill which will put kids into a variable rate system that, over time, we know will be higher than 6.8 percent.

I think of the disgust that America will feel on July 1 when they see that a critical need—higher education—was overlooked and ignored on top of the failure to turn off sequester and to pass a farm bill. It is time for this Congress to act and to protect the lower interest rates for America’s college students.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to my good friend from Texas (Mr. FLORES).

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL TODD CLARK

Mr. FLORES. I thank Mr. GOHMERT for yielding to me for a very special few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, on June 8, America lost Army Lieutenant Colonel Todd Clark in the war on terror. Lieutenant Colonel Clark was killed in action during an attack at an Army base in Afghanistan.

Lieutenant Colonel Todd Clark was a native of New York, and he attended college in Texas. His father, Jack, was also an Army colonel. Todd was in Junior ROTC while in high school, and, upon graduation, he attended Texas A&M University, where he joined Company B-2 of the Corps of Cadets.

At the time of his tragic death, he was a brigade level advisor for the 10th Mountain Division. During his Army career, he would serve on five separate deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During his 17 years of service to our country, Lieutenant Colonel Clark earned many awards and decorations, including the following:

Three Bronze Star Medals; the Purple Heart; two Meritorious Service Medals; the Army Commendation with combat distinguishing device “V”; four Army Commendation Medals; three Army Achievement Medals; the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal; the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Service Star; the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; the Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star; two Afghanistan Campaign Medals with Bronze Service Star; four Iraq Campaign Medals with Bronze Service Star; the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; the Korea Defense Service Medal; the Army Service Ribbon; three Overseas Service Ribbons; the NATO Medal—Kosovo; the NATO Medal—Combat Action Badge; and the Basic Parachutist Badge.